

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL FOR CONSERVATION OF *PAN* OKEN,  
1816, AND *PANTHERA* OKEN, 1816  
(see volume 22, pages 230-232)

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Morrison-Scott (B.Z.N. 22 : 230, 1965) requests conservation of the "generic" names *Panthera* and *Pan* from Oken's *Lehrbuch der Naturgeschichte*, published 1816. In 1956, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature rejected, in Opinion 417, the *Lehrbuch* for purposes of zoological nomenclature. I have shown elsewhere (1949, *Journ. Mammal.*, 30 : 289-301) that there is no need to revert to this non-binomial work for any zoological name. Nearly all generic names for mammals ostensibly cited from Oken's *Lehrbuch* are available in well known and nomenclaturally valid publications. Two or three "Oken" names still current but with availability from binomial works clouded by questions of homonymy or priority may give concern to some zoologists. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature can, by use of its plenary powers, validate such names from any nomenclaturally recognized source. Nevertheless, action should not be taken in cases where non-Oken names are available under the Code and in use without entailing confusion in concepts or upheavals in nomenclature.

Zoologists who publish taxonomic revisions, check lists, or catalogs of animals, assume full responsibility for each bibliographic reference they cite and for the taxonomic status and availability of each name they recognize. Authors such as G. M. Allen (1939, A check list of African mammals), G. G. Simpson (1945, The principles of classification and a classification of mammals), and J. R. Ellerman and T. C. S. Morrison-Scott (1951, Checklist of Palaearctic and Indian mammals, 1758 to 1946) who gleaned names from Palmer (1904, Index generum mammalium) but cited them as if copied directly from Oken, 1816, are representing bad names for good and imprecise or non-existent bibliographic references for original and valid sources. It is ironical that zoologists who scorned the rules of nomenclature now apply to the International Commission on Nomenclature for conservation of counterfeit names they favored and rejection of the appropriate and currently used bonafide names they disfavor.

"*Panthera* Oken, 1816"

In his proposal, Morrison-Scott states that conservation of *Panthera* for great cats requires validation of the name from Oken, 1816. He adds that inasmuch as *Felis colocolo*, the ascribed type of "Panthera Oken" is not a great cat, it is necessary to designate another type, namely *Felis pardus* Linnaeus.

Oken's *Lehrbuch* contains no generic name *Panthera* as used and understood by modern authors. *Felis pardus*, as employed by Oken, has nothing to do with his "Panthera" and is not unequivocally the Linnaean *Felis pardus*. Morrison-Scott gives no bibliographic reference to his fancied "Panthera Oken, 1816", and he cannot because there is none. In short, Morrison-Scott requests validation of a name from a work rejected for purposes of zoological nomenclature, cited from an author who never proposed the name in the form or sense currently used or recognized by Morrison-Scott, and with the type species pulled out of a hat.

Procedure, technicalities, legalities and proprieties to one side, the claim that there is need for conserving *Panthera* as of Oken, Morrison-Scott, or anyone else, does not bear scrutiny.

The most widely used name for great cats is *Felis* Linnaeus. This is the generic name applied to all North American cats, except lynxes, by Hall and Kelson (1959) in "The mammals of North America." These authors treat "Panthera" of Frisch and Oken as "unavailable". Cabrera (1958 : 298) in his authoritative "Catálogo de los mamíferos de America del Sur", employs *Leo* Brehm 1829 (Oken's *Isis*, p. 637) as the generic name for great cats. In his posthumous monograph of Argentine cats,

Cabrera (1962 : 162) categorically denies recognition to names proposed in works officially rejected for purposes of zoological nomenclature irrespective of the facade of legality they may subsequently receive. In my manuscript catalog of South American mammals, *Felis* is the generic name used for most species of cats including the jaguar. There is no intention or thought of recognizing "Panthera" under any guise.

Wide usage of *Panthera* for great cats stems from Pocock (1916, *Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.*, (8), 18 : 314). This authority believed that "since the tendency of modern systematic mammalogy has found in the present instance expression in the admission of many [!] species of leopard, lion, jaguar and tiger, it is possible, perhaps probable, that the logical outcome of that process—namely, the ascription of generic rank to each of these animals—will be followed in the future. If that be so, nominal symbols are available for them." With these remarks, Pocock (*loc. cit.*) listed the following generic names for great cats.

*Panthera* Oken, ex Allen, 1902 (*Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, 16 : 377), for the leopard.

*Tigris* Oken, ex Palmer, 1904 (*Index generum mammalium*, N.A.F., 23 : 509), for the tiger.

*Leo* Oken, ex Palmer, 1904 (*op. cit.*, p. 368), for the lion.

*Uncia* Gray, 1854 (*Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.* (2), 14 : 394), for the ounce.

*Jaguaris* Severtzow, 1858 (*Rev. Mag. Zool.* (2), 10 : 386), for the jaguar.

Recognition of five genera of great cats persuaded Pocock to raise the group to subfamily rank, the Pantherinae, primarily on the basis of a character of the hyoid apparatus which now proves to be even more tenuous than has been generally supposed. Other characters adduced for generic separation of great cats from small as typified by *Felis catus* Linnaeus, have not withstood critical review. Validation of *Panthera* as the obligate generic name for great cats is neither indicated nor in the best interest of taxonomy or nomenclature.

It is urged that Morrison-Scott's application for conservation of "Panthera Oken, 1816", be rejected. The reasons are summarized as follows.

1. "Panthera Oken, 1816" is an undigestible artifice. Current usage of the name stems from Allen, 1902 (*supra cit.*) and Palmer, 1904 (*supra cit.*).
2. The most commonly used generic name for great cats is *Felis* Linnaeus.
3. There is no strong evidence that great cats typified by the leopard, *Felis pardus* Linnaeus, are generically distinct from small cats typified by *Felis catus* Linnaeus. Generic or subgeneric distinction between the two groups is, however, recognized by some authorities (not merely authors or compilers). Generic names, other than "Panthera", for separating them are available and in use.
4. The earliest available generic (or subgeneric) name for great cats is *Leo* Brehm, 1829 (*supra cit.*), type *Felis leo* Linnaeus. Current and spreading usage of this valid and uncontroversial name promotes stability, meets with no serious objections and results in no confusion.
5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature should not validate a rejected name for which there is no need from a non-binomial work which most zoologists cannot or will not in clear conscience accept on zoological or nomenclatural grounds.

In conclusion, it is requested that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

- (1) place the name "Panthera Oken", cited by authors, on the Official List of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology;
- (2) place the generic name *Leo* Brehm, 1829 (Oken's *Isis*, p. 637), on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology.

#### "Pan Oken, 1816"

Scientific names of primates are used by a very small number of zoologists. Few anthropologists, primatologists, zookeepers, behaviorists, biomedical and biochemical investigators and others using non-human primates in research or for display, are

zoologists. Hardly any of them are taxonomists. Scientific names of animals mean little to them. The rules of nomenclature mean even less. There is an urgent need to convince non-zoologists and non-taxonomists of the importance of taxonomic discriminations and the use of correct scientific names for experimental and display animals. This task becomes particularly difficult and complicated if workers are asked to use technical names which are not valid according to our Code and which have been declared unavailable by special ruling of our Commission.

The name "Pan Oken, 1816", for the chimpanzee, has not been universally adopted. It is or would be rejected by the vast majority of zoologists familiar with the rules of nomenclature and the history of Oken's *Lehrbuch*. As noted, most of those who work with chimpanzees are not accustomed to use scientific names for animals. They may be more familiar with the pipes of Pan than with the Pan of Oken. This makes it all the more urgent to arouse the nomenclatural consciousness of those who use chimpanzees in research with the valid and convincing generic name, *Chimpansee* Voigt.

Morrison-Scott's belief that the change from *Pan* to *Chimpansee* after earlier usage of *Pan*, *Simia* and *Anthropopithecus* "hardly contributes to stability", is not supported by history.

Nomenclatural changes have consistently moved toward stability by rejection of the invalid for the valid. The history of such names as *Callithrix* Erxleben, 1777, versus *Hapale* Illiger, 1811, and *Saguinus* Hoffmannsegg, 1807, versus *Leontocebus* Wagner, 1840, *Marikina* Lesson, 1840, *Tamarin* Gray, 1870 and others, prove the point. The many "Oken names" widely used during a 20-30 year span have all but disappeared from recent literature. The attempt to salvage *Pan* (and *Panthera*) seems to be a belated and gratuitous rearguard action.

The contention that confusion would ensue should gorillas and chimpanzees be combined generically is baseless. I doubt the premise but here are the alternatives.

*Pan gorilla*

*Pan troglodytes*

versus

*Chimpansee gorilla*

*Chimpansee troglodytes*

I submit that the true identity of either chimpanzee or gorilla is less likely to be confused under the generic name *Chimpansee* than under that of *Pan*.

"Pan" gained currency through Elliott's despairingly erratic, "A review of the Primates (1913, p. 227)". Elliott's source for the name was, of course, Palmer (1904, *Index generum mammalium*, p. 508). Very little survives of Elliott's contributions to primatology and there is no good reason for clinging to his usage of "Pan Oken".

In conclusion, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is requested to

(1) reject Morrison-Scott's application for conservation of "Pan Oken".

(2) place the name "Pan Oken", cited by authors, and the sales catalog name *Theranthropus* Brookes, 1828 (A catalogue of the anatomical and zoological museum of Joshua Brookes, Esq., F.R.S., F.L.S., etc., p. 48), on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.

(3) place the generic name *Chimpansee* Voigt, 1831 (Cuvier's *Das Thierreich*, 1 : 76), type, *Simia troglodytes* Blumenbach, by monotypy, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology.

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I would like to comment on the proposed validation of the generic names *Pan* Oken, 1816, and *Panthera* Oken, 1816.

I do not think that considering one work non-nomenclatorial but validating a number of names published in it would contribute at all to make nomenclature stable. Theoretically we could have one book in the "index" as non-valid, but with the majority or the totality of its names validated.